

REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 4, 7, 8, 10, and 12-15 will be pending in the application. Claims 4, 7, 8, 10, and 13-15 are amended for the Examiner's consideration. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 11, and 16-20 are canceled. The above amendments and added claims do not add new matter to the application and are fully supported by the original disclosure. Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of Amendment is Proper

Applicants submit that the entry of the amendment is proper since no new issues are raised that would require further search and/or consideration. More specifically, this amendment places the application in condition for allowance by removing all issues of rejection.

Alternatively, Applicants submit that this amendment places the application in better form for appeal.

Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 12 contains allowable subject matter. Claim 12 was previously amended to include the features of base claim 1 and any intervening claim. Claim 12 should thus be considered allowed. Applicants submit that all of the remaining claims are in condition for allowance for the following reasons.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed. By this amendment, claim 16 is canceled, thereby rendering the instant rejection of

claim 16 moot.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the §112, 2nd paragraph, rejection of claim 16 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claims 1-4, 7, 13, 16, 17 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,299,512 to Costa et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,162,279 to Herchenrider. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 2,586,848 to Miller in view of Costa. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

While Applicants do not agree that any proper combination of the applied art renders obvious the claimed invention, by this amendment, claims 4, 7, and 13 are amended to depend from allowable independent claim 12, and claims 1-3, 5, 9, 11, and 16-20 are canceled. Thus, the various rejections of claims 1-5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 16-20 are moot. Applicants reserve the right to file the subject matter of original claims 1-20 in one or more continuing applications.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the §103(a) rejection of claims 1-5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 16-20 be withdrawn.

Request for Rejoinder of Withdrawn Claims

Withdrawn claims 8, 10, 14, and 15 have been amended to depend from allowable independent claim 12. As such, Applicants believe that these claims are patentably distinct from the applied prior art and are in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request rejoinder and allowance of claims 8, 10, 14 and 15.

CONCLUSION

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Respectfully submitted,
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